

My name is Denise King, from Lebanon, Ct. My husband and I are the custodial grandparents of a young man with intellectual disabilities. He has lived with us since he was 8. He has been on the Wait List for residential placement through DDS for 10 years. My husband will be 70 this year. My grandson needs to be living with his peers in the community where he can develop to his fullest potential. That will not happen unless there is adequate funding and some of the policies within DDS change.

We have heard over and over again that there is no money in Connecticut, yet we have continued to see millions of dollars evaporate with wasteful spending because "that's the way it's always been done" and because special interests still seem to find funding. If it is true that there is no money in our state, then we need to start talking about how to raise revenue and we need to start being serious about how we spend what we do have. Our most vulnerable citizens with ID/DD who have no voice deserve a chance to live a fulfilling life, just as the rest of us do. They need help with this and we as a society have a moral obligation to help provide it.

Please stop the cuts to the Department of Developmental Services so that those aging out of the system at 21 can have the supports they need to continue what their education has started. Over the last several years, DDS has taken an unequal share of the cuts. Over \$43 million dollars have been cut since 2012. Many procedures and policies within DDS have to change to make this Department efficient in helping our loved ones, but it must be fully funded as well. We need to fund home supports, educational planning, job coaching, day programs, and the Wait List as well. My grandson should not have to wait until we die to get a place to live with his peers, and my husband and I should be able to have a retirement before our health deteriorates and are no longer capable of caring for our grandson.

Please fund DDS now.

Frank & Denise King, Lebanon, Ct.